



# TEACHER BURNOUT AND COPING IN INDIAN SCHOOLS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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**Abstract:** With consequences for both teachers and students, teacher burnout is becoming more widely acknowledged as a systemic problem in education. This study examines burnout, job satisfaction, coping mechanisms, and occupational stress in 22 Indian in-service teachers. Results show that almost 75% of teachers deal with ongoing stress, but coping strategies like self-care and social support maintain job satisfaction. Most teachers report feeling good about their jobs despite having a lot on their plates. To improve teacher well-being and classroom effectiveness, institutional reforms—such as cutting paperwork, bolstering collegial support, and encouraging autonomy—are advised.

**Keywords:** Teacher Burnout, Coping Strategies, Job Satisfaction, Occupational Stress, Teacher well-being, Indian Education

## I. INTRODUCTION

The teaching profession requires mental, emotional, and physical exertion. Diverse student backgrounds, administrative overload, and a lack of systemic support are some of the difficulties faced by Indian classrooms. Burnout, which Maslach and Jackson (1981) defined as diminished personal accomplishment, depersonalization, and emotional exhaustion, is becoming more and more apparent. Localized studies in India are still rare, even though these issues have been studied internationally. To close that gap, this study looks at stressors, coping mechanisms, and how they relate to burnout and job satisfaction. The lack of systematic data on the stress and coping experiences of Indian teachers is the main research issue. While earlier research emphasizes the protective function of coping mechanisms (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and the impact of teacher well-being on student outcomes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the Indian context, very few have combined quantitative measurements with qualitative narratives.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Maslach and Jackson (1981), burnout is a multifaceted syndrome that includes diminished personal accomplishment, depersonalization, and emotional exhaustion. According to studies conducted worldwide, between 25% and 50% of teachers suffer from burnout; Indian teachers probably face comparable or more difficulties because of packed classrooms, limited resources, and bureaucratic demands. The COVID-19 pandemic made it more difficult to distinguish between personal and professional life, which increased stress.

Stress at work can occur on several levels. Teachers battle motivation, a variety of learning needs, and student behavior in the classroom. At the school level, stress is increased by role ambiguity, administrative overload, and lack of recognition. Standardized testing, parental expectations, low pay, and restricted career advancement are examples of systemic pressures (Kyriacou, 2001). Teachers in India must adjust to overlapping curricula and assessment standards due to the country's, multiple school boards.

When determining whether stress results in resilience or burnout, coping mechanisms are crucial. The framework developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) makes a distinction between emotion-focused coping, which controls emotional reactions, and problem-focused coping, which deals directly with stressors. While maladaptive coping mechanisms like avoidance or substance abuse worsen results, effective coping frequently combines both strategies.

Burnout is prevented by job satisfaction. Satisfaction and resilience are increased by positive relationships, encouraging leadership, acknowledgment, reasonable workloads, and growth opportunities. On the other hand, a heavy workload and a lack of acknowledgment hasten burnout. Classroom performance is directly impacted by teachers; well-being: teachers who are emotionally stable encourage participation and creativity, while those who are under stress find it difficult to maintain control, patience, and continuity.

Support from institutions is essential. Higher morale and lower turnover are reported by schools that offer autonomy, resources, collegial collaboration, and appreciation. Localized research is necessary because there are still gaps in our knowledge of how these factors function in Indian schools.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This mixed-methods exploratory study looks at Indian teachers, coping mechanisms, job satisfaction, and burnout. Purposive sampling was used to select 22 in-service teachers from CBSE, ICSE, IB, and state boards to capture diversity. Surveys and interviews were used to gather data, which combined quantitative measurements with qualitative accounts.

The main theories suggested that while institutional support and efficient coping mechanisms lessen these effects, increased stress is associated with higher levels of burnout and lower levels of satisfaction. Secondary hypotheses proposed that adaptable coping mechanisms maintain satisfaction in the face of demanding workloads and that teacher well-being improves classroom effectiveness.

#### 3.1 Research Objectives

The study sought to determine the causes of occupational stress, investigate coping strategies, investigate the connection between job satisfaction and burnout, evaluate the effect of well-being on teaching, and collect teacher suggestions for institutional change. Adding to the body of knowledge on teacher mental health in Indian educational settings was a more general goal.

#### 3.2 Research Design

A mixed methods approach was used, combining qualitative interviews with quantitative surveys. This method made it possible to statistically correlate stress, coping, and satisfaction while capturing teachers, real-world experiences through thematic coding.

#### 3.3 Sample Design and Size

22 educators from various school boards participated in the study; they were purposefully chosen to guarantee representation in a variety of educational settings. Despite the small sample size, it offered valuable insights into the difficulties Indian educators face.

### IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The most important stressors were found to be workload, paperwork, a variety of student needs, and administrative demands. The most successful coping mechanisms were self-care practices, problem-solving techniques, and social support. Withdrawal and avoidance were less successful and frequently associated with increased levels of burnout. Most teachers expressed job satisfaction despite stress, especially when they had support from colleagues and recognition. Depersonalization was less common than emotional exhaustion. Excessive bureaucracy and a lack of systemic support were examples of institutional gaps. Teachers suggested three major reforms: encouraging autonomy, improving collegial support, and cutting down on paperwork.

### V. CONCLUSION

Indian teachers frequently experience burnout, but it is mitigated by healthy coping mechanisms and a positive work environment. When educators find purpose and acknowledgment in their work, job satisfaction endures. To maintain teacher well-being and classroom efficacy, institutional reforms are necessary.

## V. LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER SCOPE

The study's focus on Indian schools limits cross-cultural comparisons, and the small sample size limits generalizability. Larger samples, longitudinal designs, and intervention studies should be used in future research to assess how well institutional reforms are working.

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